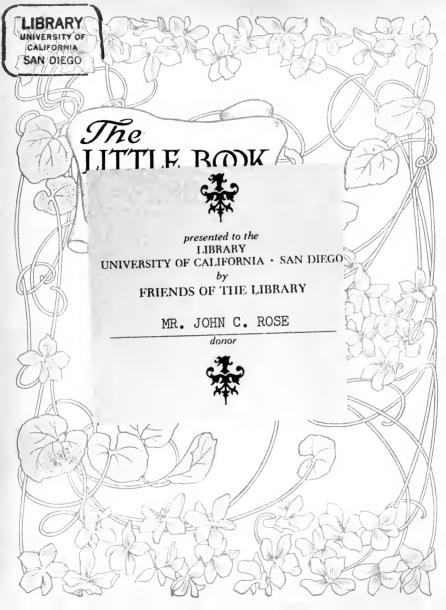
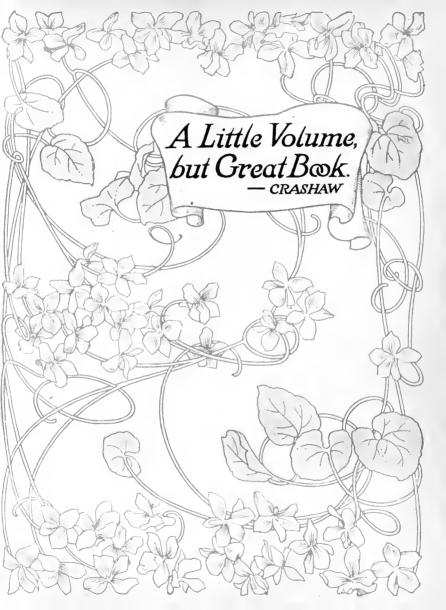


THE LITTLE BOOK OF LAUGHTER

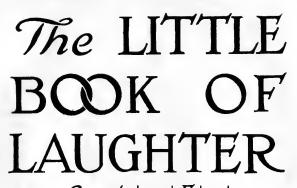




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Compiled and Edited with an Introduction by Wallace and Frances Rice





Introduction

T IS believed that this is the first time a collection of verse devoted to Laughter has been brought together, and the poems which follow will show, better than any description of them, what an interesting and delectable field it is to glean in. Yet Laughter is another of the few topics which have appealed little to the singers of this or any other day. It seems as if there were a distrust of the physical act that struck them dumb before it. It cannot be from lack of the humorous sense; for no person without it can write poetry at all, since precisely the sense of proportion is needed for expression in rhyme and rhythm which the sense of humor ensures.

Nor is it in any sense true that poetry is lacking in the element of mirth and merriment. On the contrary, much of the finest verse is alive with the spirit of joy, and no small share of our singing is devoted to jollity and conviviality. It is merely that Laughter and Laughing, the crown and pinnacle of human mirthfulness, have not been seized upon by the poet as suited to his calmer and more remote form of artistic expression. Laughing songs there are, in all languages, but not laughing poems; and it may be shrewdly suspected in these modern days that the poets themselves have been laughed at too much and too often for them to regard Laughter with friendly eyes.

Yet, as Mr. Blunt proves in the concluding poem of this book, it is possible to treat Laughter seriously and with dignity. Not one living being on this earth laughs as an expression of mirth except mortal man; and if he does not commemorate the fact, surely no one else can. An animal, the hyena, makes a noise that closely resembles our laughter; but the beast is of too disgusting a nature to permit his celebration in poetry. On the other hand, two birds, our own northern loon, and the giant kingfisher or laughing jackass of Australia, also use a sound distinctly akin in sound to our laughter for their customary cry, and both of these have been treated in verses which may be found within.

While it is impossible for any one to exhaust the enormous and growing body of English poetry on any topic, it is believed that a large part of the poems devoted to Laughter are included here, their number eked out by verses which mention Laughing, and several which deal with individuals who were regarded as laughworthy.

WALLACE RICE.

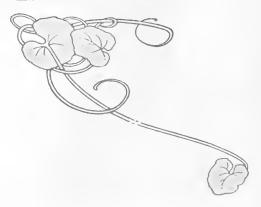
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The LITTLE BOOK OF LAUGHTER



Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.

-John Milton.

Laughter Holding Both His Sides

Aye, thou varlet! Laugh away!
All the world 's a holiday!
Laugh away and roar and shout
Till thy hoarse tongue lolleth out!
Bloat thy cheeks and bulge thine eyes
Unto bursting; pelt thy thighs
With thy swollen palms, and roar
As thou never hast before!
Lustier! wilt thou! peal on peal!
Stiflest? Squat and grind thy heel —
Wrestle with thy loins, and then
Wheeze the whiles, and whoop again!
— James Whitcomb Riley.

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone;
For this brave old earth must borrow its mirth;
It has troubles enough of its own.

- Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

The Little Book of Laughter

On the Laugh of Madame D'Albret

Yes, that fair neck, too beautiful by half,
Those eyes, that voice, that bloom, all do her honor:
Yet after all, that little giddy laugh
Is what, in my mind, sits the best upon her.

Good God! 'T would make the very streets and ways
Through which she passes, burst into a pleasure!
Did melancholy come to mar my days,
And kill me in the lap of too much leisure,
No spell were wanting, from the dead to raise me,
But only that sweet laugh, wherewith she slays me.

— Leigh Hunt, from the French of Marot.

God gave man

His life and breath,
Gave him knowledge

Of his death;
And thereafter
Gave him laughter.

- Wallace Rice.

How Laughter Came to Man

The Seraph of the Flaming Sword
The gates had locked and barred,
As Father Adam stands aghast
At life, so newly hard;
Eve bows beside him in her tears—
The first she 's ever shed;
For on their hearts the primal curse
Hangs heavier than lead.

Henceforth in sweat their bread they eat,
And mourn the sorry fate
That drives them from the bliss within
The paradisal gate;
Their angel playmates ne'er again
They 'll see — and doubly grieve
As off they set, most mournfully,
Poor Adam and poor Eve.

The mountain clays besmear them o'er,
The wood stains foot and hand—
They are a funny looking pair
As eye to eye they stand;
When comes a sound of sudden wings
That turns their sad hearts glad,
And lo! there flies down unto them
A blithesome angel lad.

His dimpled cheeks are fat and fair, His aureole's askew, His eyes are twinkling, and his smile Is broad enough for two; The look of him is merriment,
The sight of him is mirth;
And Eve and Adam think he is
The jolliest thing on earth!

"Who sent you?" curious Eve inquires —
She 's curious still, is she;
And Adam echoes, "Who sent you?" —
Still following suit, you see.
"The Lord in mercy sends me here —

From Eden straight I flew —
To turn the world all golden, when
It seems to be all blue.''

No longer lonely, quite refreshed,
They march beside the boy;
The world may have its sorrows, but
It holds a lot of joy;
And ever since, the weariest wight
Keeps thoughts of Paradise,
And quite forgets his work and woe
When Laughter to him flies.

- Wallace Rice.

'Twixt a laugh and a sigh
We come and we go.
We are born and we die
'Twixt a laugh and a sigh,
With the stars in the sky
Or the sun on the snow—
'Twixt a laugh and a sigh
We come and we go.

-John Jarvis Holden.

A Song of the Four Seasons

When Spring comes laughing
By vale and hill,
By wind-flower walking
And daffodil,—
Sing stars of morning,
Sing morning skies,
Sing blue of speedwell,—
And my Love's eyes.

When comes the Summer,
Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
That no bee sips;
Sing red, red roses,—
And my Love's lips.

When Autumn scatters
The leaves again,
And piled sheaves bury
The broad-wheeled wain,—
Sing flutes of harvest
Where men rejoice;
Sing rounds of reapers,—
And my Love's voice.

But when comes Winter With hail and storm, And red fire roaring And ingle warm,—

Sing first sad going Of friends that part: Then sing glad meeting,-And my Love's heart.

- Austin Dobson.

Ye Laughing Maids

Ye laughing maids, what rippling rill, Though ferny dells its raptures fill, Makes dulcet melody like yours? What floweret that the bee immures. What moonlit lily, daffodil, Or e'en the rose whose scents distil When sunshine slants on some June hill, Hath half the tempting of your lures, Ye laughing maids?

In sooth, through life, despite the ill Great gods grind slow from mill on mill, Heaped high with woes each year matures, One memory wholly dear endures -And this your virgin voices thrill,

Ye laughing maids!

- Oliver Marble.

We look before and after. We pine for what is not; Our sincerest laughter With some pain is fraught.

- Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind. - Oliver Goldsmith.

The Height of the Ridiculous

I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came; How kind it was of him To mind a slender man like me, He of the mighty limb.

"These to the printer," I exclaimed, And, in my humorous way, I added (as a trifling jest), "There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched, And saw him peep within; At the first line he read, his face Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad, And shot from ear to ear; He read the third; a chuckling noise I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar; The fifth; his waistband split; The sixth; he burst five buttons off, And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Shake the midriff of despair with laughter.

— Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Rigadoon

Whatever the throng, I will sing my song And gay shall it be, Because, you'll agree, If bitter the strain There's nothing to gain And much to be lost -And mirth pays the cost, Since earth has no need Of the sad-sighing reed, But much doth desire The balm-breathing lyre. Oh, therefore let me In glad-sounding key Pipe early and late, With sweet Laughter mate, Till Sorrow forget Her lashes so wet And dance to my tune A light rigadoon.

- Charles G. Blanden.

Song

Quixotic is his enterprise, and hopeless his adventure is, Who seeks for jocularities that have n't yet been said.

The world has joked incessantly for over fifty centuries, And every joke that 's possible has long ago been made.

I started as a humorist with lots of mental fizziness, But humor is a drug that it 's the fashion to abuse; For my stock in trade, my fixtures, and the good-will

of the business

No reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.

And if anybody choose He may circulate the news

That no reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.

O happy was that humorist—the first that made a pun at all—

Who when a joke occurred to him, however poor and mean,

Was absolutely certain that it never had been done at all — $\,$

How popular at dinners must that humorist have been!

O the days when some stepfather for the query held a handle out,

The door mat from the scraper, is it distant very far?

And when no one knew where Moses was when Aaron
put the candle out,

And no one had discovered that a door could be a-jar!

But your modern hearers are In their tastes particular, And they sneer if you inform them that a door can be a-jar!

In search of quip and quiddity I 've sat all day, alone, apart —

And all that I could hit on as a problem was — to find Analogy between a scrag of mutton and a Bony-part, Which offers slight employment to the speculative mind:

For you cannot call it very good, however great your charity —

It 's not the sort of humor that is greeted with a shout—

And I 've come to the conclusion that the mine of jocularity,

In present Anno Domini, is worked completely out!

Though the notion you may scout,
I can prove beyond a doubt

That the mine of jocularity is utterly worked out!

— William S. Gilbert.

The man who frets at worldly strife Grows sallow, sour, and thin; Give us the lad whose happy life Is one perpetual grin!

- Joseph Rodman Drake.

Time past I thought it worth my while
To hunt all day to catch a smile:
Now ladies do not smile, but laugh,
I like it not so much by half;
And yet perhaps it might be shown
A laugh is but a smile full-blown.

— Walter Savage Landor.

Yet

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling!
Sing by the sunset's glow;
Now while the shadows are long, darling;
Now while the lights are low;
Something so chaste and coy, darling!
Something that melts the chest;
Milder than even Molloy, darling!
Better than Bingham's best.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling!
Sing as you sang of yore,
Lisping of love that is strong, darling!
Strong as a big barn-door;
Let the true knight be bold, darling!
Let him arrive too late;
Stick in a bower of gold, darling!
Stick in a golden gate.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling!
Bear on the angels' wings
Children that know no wrong, darling!
Little cherubic things!
Sing of their sunny hair, darling!
Get them to die in June;
Wake, if you can, on the stair, darling!
Echoes of tiny shoon.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling! Sentiment may be false, Yet it will worry along, darling! Set to a tum-tum valse; See that the verses are few, darling!
Keep to the rule of three;
That will be better for you, darling!
Certainly better for me.

- Owen Seaman.

Laughter and Love

O Laughter, Love, delicious pair,
Together anything ye dare;
Then why doth Love put on the rue,
Or heartless Laughter ring untrue,
When hand in hand ye are so fair?

Gay Laughter takes from Love all care,
Dear Love makes Laughter sweet as dew;
The gods preserve you one, not two,
O Laughter, Love!

When Laughter loves, what mirth is there!

And when Love laughs, the heart 's laid bare!

When laughing Love goes forth to sue,

Or loving Laughter comes to woo,

What man or maid escapes your snare,

O Laughter, Love?

— John Jarvis Holden.

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time: Some that will evermore peep through their eyes And laugh, like parrots, at a bagpiper; And others of such vinegar aspect, That they 'll not show their teeth in way of smile Though Nester swear the jest be laughable.

- William Shakespeare.

Father O'Flynn

Of priests we can offer a charmin' variety,
Far renowned for larnin' and piety;
Still, I 'd advance ye widout impropriety,
Father O'Flynn as the flower of them all.
Here 's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,
Slainté, and slainté, and slainté agin;
Powerfulest preacher, and
Tinderest teacher, and
Kindliest creature in ould Donegal.

Don't talk of your Provost and Fellows of Trinity,
Famous for ever at Greek and Latinity,
Faix and the divils and all at Divinity,
Father O'Flynn 'd make hares of them all!
Come, I vinture to give ye my word,
Niver the likes of his logic was heard,
Down from mythology
Into thayology,
Troth! and conchology if he 'd the call.

Och! Father O'Flynn you 've the wonderful way wid you,
All ould sinners are wishful to pray wid you,
All the young childer are wild for to play wid you,
You 've such a way wid you, Father avick!
Still for all you 've so gintle a soul.
Gad, you 've your flock in the grandest control;
Checkin' the crazy ones,
Coaxin' onaisy ones,
Lifting the lazy ones on wid the stick.

And though quite avoidin' all foolish frivolity,
Still, at all seasons of innocent jollity,
Where was the play-boy could claim an equality
At comicality, Father, wid you?
Once the Bishop looked grave at your jest,
Till this remark set him off wid the rest:

'Is it lave gayety

All to the laity? Cannot the clargy be Irishmen too?"

Here's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,
Slainté, and slainté, and slainté agin;
Powerfulest preacher, and
Tinderest teacher, and
Kindliest creature in ould Donegal.
— Alfred Perceval Grayes.

The Cod

Some people like the cod because He 's good to bake or boil, But every child must love the fish Who gives such pleasant oil.

When thrice a day mamma looks gay,
And holds the brimming cup,
Oh, don't you laugh and shout "hooray!"
And fly to snap it up!

— John Joy Bell.

Laugh and be well.

— Matthey: Greene.

Lines to the Laughing Jackass

I come from busy haunts of men With Nature to commune, Which you, it seems, observe, and then Laugh out like some buffoon.

You cease, and through the forest drear I pace with sense of awe,
'When once again upon my ear
Breaks in your harsh guffaw.

I look aloft, to yonder place
Where placidly you sit,
And tell you to your very face,
I do not like your wit.

I 'm in no mood for blatant jest,I hate your mocking song,My weary soul demands the restDenied to it so long.

Besides, there passes through my brain The poet's love of fame — Why should not an Australian strain Immortalize my name?

And so I pace the forest drear, Filled with a sense of awe, When louder still upon my ear Breaks in your harsh guffaw.

Yet, truly, Jackass, it may be, My words are all unjust: You laugh at what you hear and see, And laugh because you must.

You 've seen Man, civilized and rude, Of varying race and creed: The black-skinned savage almost nude, The Englishman in tweed. . . .

While you, from yonder lofty height,
Have studied human ways,
And with a satirist's delight
Dissected hidden traits.

Laugh on, laugh on! Your rapturous shout
Again on me intrudes;
But I have found your secret out,
O Cynic of the Woods.

Well! I confess, grim mocking elf, Howe'er I rhapsodize, That I am more in love with self Than with the earth and skies.

So I will lay the epic by
That I had just begun;
Why should I scribble? Let me lie
And bask here in the sun.

And let me own, were I endowed
With your fine humorous sense,
I, too, should laugh — aye, quite as loud,
At all Man's vain pretence.

- Arthur Patchett Martin.

Lines to Miss Florence Huntingdon

Sweet maiden of Passamaquoddy
Shall we seek for communion of souls
Where the deep Mississippi meanders
Or the distant Saskatchewan rolls?

Ah, no! — for in Maine I will find thee
A sweetly sequestrated nook,
Where the far-winding Skoodoowabskooksis
Conjoins with the Skoodoowabskook.

There wander two beautiful rivers
With many a winding and crook;
The one is the Skoodoowabskooksis;
The other, the Skoodoowabskook.

Ah, sweetest of haunts! though unmentioned In geography, atlas, or book, How fair is the Skoodoowabskooksis When joining the Skoodoowabskook!

Our cot shall be close by the waters, Within that sequestrated nook, Reflected by Skoodoowabskooksis, And mirrored in Skoodoowabskook.

You shall sleep to the music of leaflets, By zephyrs in wantonness shook, To dream of the Skoodoowabskooksis And, perhaps, of the Skoodoowabskook.

Your food shall be fish from the waters, Drawn forth on the point of a hook, From murmuring Skoodoowabskooksis, Or meandering Skoodoowabskook.

You shall quaff the most sparkling of waters, Drawn forth from a silvery brook Which flows to the Skoodowabskooksis, And so to the Skoodowabskook.

And you shall preside at the banquet,
And I shall wait on you as cook;
And we 'll talk of the Skoodoowabskooksis,
And sing of the Skoodoowabskook.

Let others sing loudly of Saco,
Of Quoddy and Tattamagouche,
Of Kenebeccasis and Quaco,
Of Merigoniche and Buctouche,

Of Nashwaak and Magaguadavique, Or Memmerimammericook; There 's none like the Skoodoowabskooksis, Excepting the Skoodoowabskook!

The burden of an ancient rhyme
Is "By the forelock seize on Time."
Time in some corner heard it said;
Pricking his ears, away he fled;
And, seeing me upon the road,
A hearty curse on me bestowed.
"What if I do the same to thee?
How would thou like it?" thundered he,
And without answer thereupon
Seizing my forelock—it was gone.
—Walter Savage Landor.

The King of Yvetot

There flourished once a potentate
Whom History does n't name;
He rose at ten, retired at eight,
And snored unknown to Fame!
A night cap for his crown he wore,
A common cotton thing,
Which Jeanette to his bedside bore,
This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!

With four diurnal banquets he
His appetite allayed,
And on a jackass leisurely
His royal progress made.
No cumbrous state his steps would clog,
Fear to the winds he 'd fling;
His single escort was a dog,
This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!

He owned to only one excess—
He doted on his glass;
But when a king gives happiness,
Why that, you see, will pass!
On every bottle, small or great,
For which he used to ring,
He laid a tax inordinate,
This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!

Such crowds of pretty girls he found Occasion to admire,
It gave his subjects double ground For greeting him as Sire!
To shoot for cocoa-nuts he manned His army every spring,
But all conscription sternly banned This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!

He eyed no neighboring domain
With envy or with greed,
And, like a pattern sovereign,
Took Pleasure for his creed!
Yet 't was not, if aright I ween,
Until his life took wing,
His subjects saw that he had been
A jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!

This worthy monarch, readers mine,
You even may now see
Embellishing a tavern-sign
Well known to you and me.
There, when the fete-day bottle flows,
Their bumpers they will bring,
And toast beneath his very nose
This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
This jolly little king!
-William Toynbee, from the French of Béranger.

The Ballade of Prose and Rhyme

When the roads are heavy with mire and rut,
In November fogs, in December snows,
When the North Wind howls, and the doors are shut,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;—
But whenever a scent from the whitehorn blows,
And the jasmine-stars to the casement climb,
And a Rosalind-face at the lattice shows,
Then hey! — for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,

When the reason stands on its squarest toes,

When the mind (like a beard) has a "formal cut,"

There is place and enough for the pains of prose;—
But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,

And the young year draws to the "golden prime,"—

And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a rose,

Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

In a theme where the thoughts have a pedant-strut
In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and "Noes,"
In a starched procession of "If" and "But,"
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;—
But whenever a soft glance softer grows,
And the light hours dance to the trysting-time,
And the secret is told "that no one knows,"
Then hey! — for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

In the work-a-day world,—for its needs and woes,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
But whenever the May-bells clash and chime!
Then hey! — for the ripple of laughing rhyme!
—Austin Dobson.

Scena

Cheerily carols the lark
Over the cot.

Merrily whistles the clerk
Scratching a blot.

But the lark
And the clerk,
I remark,
Comfort me not!

As it 's give' me to perceive,

I most cert'in'y believe

When a man 's just glad plum through,
God 's pleased with him, same as you.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

Laughter and song for my cheer,
Life is so fair.
None so happy as I
Anywhere;
Birds in the woods carol clear,
White clouds in the sky.

-Dora Sigerson Shorter.

Pierrot's Philosophy

Where are you going, dressed in white,
Pierrot, Pierrot,
Since Pierrette has deceived you quite?
Tira, tiri, tira!

"I go to visit Columbine,"
Said Pierrot, Pierrot,
"To mend this broken heart of mine.
Tira, tiri, tira!"

The story is not new,
It may apply to you;
If sweethearts will deceive,
Why, hang it, do not care; oh! hang it, do not grieve,
But—imitate Pierrot.

If Columbine should jilt you, too,
Pierrot, Pierrot,
In heaven's name, what would you do?
Tira, tiri, tira!

"Then to another girl I 'll go,''
Said Pierrot, Pierrot,

"She surely will console Pierrot,
Tira, tiri, tira!"

The story is not new,
It may apply to you;
If sweethearts will deceive,
Why, hang it, do not care; oh! hang it, do not grieve,
But—imitate Pierrot.

—William Theodore Peters.

From "Barney McGee"

Barney McGee, there 's no end of good luck in you, Will-o'-the-wisp, with a flicker of Puck in you, Wild as a bull-pup, and all of his pluck in you—

Let a man tread on your coat and he 'll see!
Eyes like the lakes of Killarney for clarity,
Nose that turns up without any vulgarity,
Smile like a cherub, and hair that is carroty—
Whoop you 're a rarity, Barney McGee!

Mellow as Tarragon,
Prouder than Aragon —
Hardly a paragon.

You will agree —

Here 's all that 's fine to you! Books and old wine to you! Girls be divine to you,

Barney McGee! .

Och, and the girls whose poor hearts you deracinate, Whirl and bewilder and flutter and fascinate!

Faith, it 's so killing you are, you assassinate —

Murder 's the word for you Barney McGee!

Murder 's the word for you, Barney McGee!

Bold when they 're sunny, and smooth when they 're showery —

Oh, but the style of you, fluent and flowery!

Chesterfield's way, with a touch of the Bowery!

How would they silence you, Barney machree?

Naught can your gab allay,
Learnéd as Rabelais —
You in his abbey lay
Once on the spree.
Here 's to the smile of you! —
Oh, but the guile of you!—
And a long while of you,

Barney McGee!

Facile with phrases of length and Latinity, Like honorificabilitudinity,

Where is the maid could resist your vicinity,

Wiled by the impudent grace of your plea?
Then your vivacity and pertinacity
Carry the day with the divil's audacity;
No mere veracity robs your sagacity
Of perspicacity, Barney McGee.

When all is new to them,
What will you do to them?
Will you be true to them?
Who shall decree?
Here 's a fair strife to you!
Health and long life to you!
And a great wife to you,
Barney McGee!

Barney McGee, you 're the pick of gentility; Nothing can phase you, you 've such a facility; Nobody ever yet found your utility—

There is the charm of you, Barney McGee; Under conditions that others would stammer on, Still undisturbed as a cat or a Cameron, Polished as somebody in the Decameron,

Putting the glamour on prince or Pawnee.

In your meanderin',
Love and philanderin',
Calm as a mandarin
Sipping his tea!
Under the art of you,
Parcel and part of you,
Here 's to the heart of you,
Barney McGee!

You who were ever alert to be friend a man, You who were ever the first to defend a man, You who had always the money to lend a man,

Down on his luck and hard up for a V! Sure, you 'll be playing a harp in beatitude — And a quare sight you will be in that attitude — Some day, where gratitude seems but a platitude,

You 'll find your latitude, Barney McGee.

That 's no film-flam at all,
Frivol or sham at all,
Just the plain — damn it all,
Have one with me!
Here 's one and more to you!
Friends by the score to you,
True to the core to you,
Barney McGee!

-Richard Hovey.

I am not sad, and Laughter's cup Oft comes to me. I drink it up. In thankfulness that so much mirth Should fall to one so long on earth; And sometimes sit to muse again Upon the laughter of us men: How often for unworthy things Against a startled sky it rings, How often it is half a lie To please the ape that 's standing by: And yearn with all my heart for joy Like that in laughter of a boy, Who merely laughs because he must, At simple things, in simple trust -All mirth, whole-hearted merriment, As happy as 't is innocent.

-Christopher Bannister.

Thalia

Since first you crowned the rustic's vernal feast,
O muse! with laughter and your comic art,
And in the rural pastimes bore your part
With broadest jest and mirth that ay increased
Your sway has traveled from the classic East
To banter care, and fill the throbbing mart
Of tragic life with whims and quirks that start
The pulse to thrill with joy where joy had ceased.

Behold! To-day your crook and grinning mask

Are greeted as if royal tokens sent

To end the sordid soul's imprisonment

And gild with wit the plodder's weary task;

To make despair the laggard's scourge, at most,

And fortune's fiercest fling a futile boast.

—Ray Clark Rose.

No baby has to learn to cry:
But Oh, how eagerly we try
To teach the little ones from birth
Smiles, laughter — anything of mirth!
— Christopher Bannister.

I fear I have a little turn for satire; And yet, methinks, the older that one grows Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

-George Lord Byron.

Better write of laughter than of tears; Laughter is the natural function of man.

— François Rabelais.

The Quarrel

Love and Laughter fall at outs:
Clouds grow heavy in the sky
And the sun is like to die
When Love 's glum and Laughter flouts.

Love went forth that day to woo—
Laughter stayed at home to frown;
Love, once light as the thistledown,
Came again, most sad to view;

For the maiden he would see Looked amazed, and turned away; Where was Love, once blithe and gay, In that face of misery?

Laughter to the damsel went:

She in wonder gazed at him,

Heard his voice grown harsh and grim —

Sent him home again, forspent.

Laughter looked at Love, and sighed;
Love and Laughter gazed with tears;
Both dismissed their doubts and fears,
Made it up, and kissed and cried.

Hand in hand they now appear —
Lives there lass in any lane
Who would dare deny the twain,
When Love 's gay and Laughter dear?
— John Jarvis Holden.

Vive la Bagatelle!

Sing a song of foolishness, laughing stocks and cranks!

The more there are the merrier, come and join the ranks!

Life is dry and stupid; whoop her up a bit! Donkeys live in clover; bray and throw a fit!

Take yourself in earnest, never stop to think,
Strut and swagger boldly, dress in red and pink;
Prate of stuff and nonsense, get yourself abused;
Some one 's got to play the fool to keep the crowd amused!

Bully for the idot! Bully for the guy! You could be a prig yourself, if you would only try! Altruistic asses keep the fun alive; Clowns are growing scarcer; hurry and arrive!

I seen a crazy critic a-writin' of a screed;

"Tendencies" and "Unities" — Maeterlinck, indeed!

He wore a paper collar, and his tie was up behind;

If that 's the test of Culture, then I 'm glad I 'm not refined!

Let me laugh at you; then you can laugh at me;
Then we 'll josh together everything we see;
Every one 's a nincompoop to another's view;
Laughter makes the sun shine; Roop-de-doodle-doo!
—Gelett Burgess.

And laughter oft is but an art

To drown the outcry of the heart.

— Hartley Coleridge.

The Mask of Mirth

Ho! this is Mirth, fat-cheeked and laughing-eyed,
And wide of mouth where impish dimples lurk
In playful negligence—content to shirk
The earnestness and sober sense of pride,
That smacks of regulariness personified.
In grins that ripple with content, and smirk
Of perfect joy or sly satiric quirk

That smacks of roguishness personified.

And is not this the best—to make a jest
Of life, and sweep the veil of sorrow by;
To steep the soul in mirthful carelessness,
And turn unheeding ears to care's behest,
Ambition's strident call, or sweet Love's sigh?
Ah, Mirth, a truce; that grin may mask distress.
— Ray Clark#Rose.

It May Be

It may be we shall know in the hereafter
Why we, begetting hopes, give birth to fears,
And why the world 's too beautiful for laughter,
Too beautiful for tears.

— Percy Addleshaw.

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way, And merrily hent the stile-a; A merry heart goes all the day, Your sad tires in a mile-a.

- William Shakespeare.

At Fontainebleau

It was a day of sun and rain,
Uncertain as a child's swift moods;
And I shall never spend again
So blithe a day among the woods.

Was it because the gods were pleased That they were awful in our eyes, Whom we in very deed appeased With barley-cakes of sacrifice?

The forest knew her and was glad,
And laughed for very joy to know
Her child was with her; then, grown sad,
She wept, because her child must go.

And Alice, like a little Faun,
Went leaping over rocks and ferns,
Coursing the shadow-race from dawn
Until the twilight-flock returns.

And she would spy and she would capture
The shyest flower that lit the grass;
The joy I had to watch her rapture
Was keen as even her rapture was.

The forest knew her and was glad,
And laughed and wept for joy and woe.

This was the welcome that she had
Among the woods of Fontainebleau.

— Arthur Symons.

To Quenchless Laughter

Pan fathered thee, Thalia gave thee birth,
O quenchless Laughter, when Man first was sent
To strut his day, and give thy powers vent
That thou mightest part pretense from things of
worth;

Kin of thy blood are Happiness and Mirth,
Thou 'rt Joy's stout brother, twin to Merriment,
Wit's follower, comrade to Health and Content:
Long mayst thou live to shake the sober earth!

Folly's first foe and Pride's best enemy,
Of melancholy the unfailing cure,
And certain tonic for our daily smart,
Come Laughter, with Good Cheer and Jollity,
Man's Honest friend, welcome in every heart
To be both wealth and solace for the poor!

— Wallace Rice.

The girl with dimples — bless her soul!

How sweet she is at Mirth's alarm

In leaving Laughter, as a whole,

Not only Merriment, but Charm.

— Oliver Marble.

Long before the college cheer
Came to vex the modern ear,
Laughter could a better show:
Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha! Ho-ho!
— John Jarvis Holden.

I had rather have a fool to make me merry, Than experience to make me sad.

- William Shakespeare.

From "The Golfer's Rubaiyat"

Wake! for the sun has driven in equal flight The stars before him from the Tee of Night, And holed them every one without a miss, Swinging at ease his gold-shod Shaft of Light.

Now the fresh Year, reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Pores on this Club and That with anxious eye,
And dreams of Rounds beyond the Rounds of Liars.

Come, choose your Ball, and in the Fire of Spring Your Red Coat, and your wooden Putter fling; The Club of Time has but a little while To waggle, and the Club is on the swing.

Whether at Musselburgh or Shinnecock, In motley Hose or humbler motley Sock, The Cup of Life is ebbing Drop by Drop, Whether the Cup be filled with Scotch or Bock.

A Bag of Clubs, a Silver-Town or two,
A Flask of Scotch, a Pipe of Shag — and Thou
Beside me caddying in the Wilderness —
Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent Jamie and His, and heard great argument Of Grip and Stance and Swing; but evermore Found at the Exit but a Dollar spent. With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand sought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped:
"You hold it This Way, and you swing it So."

The swinging Brassie strikes; and, having struck, Moves on: nor all your Wit or future Luck Shall lure it back to cancel half a Stroke, Nor from the Card a single Seven pluck.

And that inverted Ball they call the High—
By which the Duffer thinks to live or die,
Lift not your hands to It for help, for it
As impotently froths as you or I.

I sometimes think that never springs so green
The Turf as where some Good Fellow has been,
And every emerald Stretch the Fair Green shows
His kindly Tread has known, his sure Play seen.

Yon rising Moon that leads us Home again, How oft hereafter will she wax and wane; How oft hereafter rising wait for us At this same Turning — and for One in vain.

And when, like her, my Golfer, I have been
And am no more above the pleasant Green,
And you in your mild Journey pass the Hole
I made in One—ah! pay my Forfeit then!
— Henry Walcott Boynton.

Laughing Bill

I know a shiftless sort o' chap
Who never cares to work;
The only duties that he has
He always tries to shirk;
The few things he attempts to do
He does without much skill,
And yet, somehow, folks seem to like—
And sometimes love—old Bill.

He has no wife or chick or child,
He does not own a cent,
Nor home, nor clothes, worth speaking of;
And yet he seems content.
And what is better, everywhere
He takes contentment still,
For he is always laughing, and
They call him Laughing Bill.

There is n't anything you ask
Bill will not start to do;
He keeps you guessing all the time—
But keeps you laughing, too.
And every hour of every day
We send for him, until
He is the busiest thing in town,
Old lazy Laughing Bill.

The children tag him all about;
He gives them from his store
Of useless things the things they love,
Till he can give no more,

And then he starts to make them toys
With heariest good will—
They 're never made; but then, he tries,
And laughs, and goes,—old Bill!

The mothers love him, and the men
All smile to see him roun',
No one is half so popular
In all that blesséd town.
He chases far away the tears
Of every Jack and Jill;
He laughs, and then they 're laughing, too,
At sight of Laughing Bill.

And I 've a notion when it comes
To doing good on earth,
The lantern-jaw may make things go,
However lacking mirth;
And yet—and yet—on the Great Day
I cannot think that ill
Is coming to that idle, shiftless,
Lazy Laughing Bill!

— Oliver Marble.

A merrier man
Within the limits of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-loving jest.

— William Shakespeare.

Laugh where we must, be candid where we can.

— Alexander Pope.

A Match

If love were what the rose is
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or gray grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We 'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We 'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons

And tears of night and morrow And laughs of maid and boy; If you were thrall to sorrow, And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We 'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We 'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mirth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were lord of pain.
—Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Her smile was prodigal of summery shine,— Gayly persistent,—like a morn in June That laughs away the clouds, and up and down Goes making merry with the ripening grain.

- Margaret Junkin Preston.

Man laughs:

In youth because he knows no better; In age because he knows so well.

- Christopher Bannister.

The Collaboration

The novelist (lady) was in despair

Hours and hours she'd sat her there,

With one hand pressed

To her storm-tossed chest

And the other hand clutched in her brown back hair.

Her novel was finished, save Chapter Last;

All previous efforts had been surpassed;

But what to do

With the puppets who

Had danced to her fiddling she hardly knew.

Shall she marry Claude to the Lady Grey? Or hash his hopes with a mincing Nay? Shall she kill the villain, or let him stay On earth that Remorse may on him prey?

And how about The adventuress stout?

And the rakish Lord with a touch of gout?

And the ingénue

With the eyes so blue — What at the end shall this puppet do? Thus she fingered the ends of her tangled plot And pondered how she should untie the knot.

The more she pondered, the worse it got.

"I never," she cried, "shall undo this knot,
Unless by chance,
In a dream or trance,
I see the end of my great romance.
Till then," she said, with a mournful sigh,

"To finish the novel I need not try."

And feeling the need

Of a little feed,

She ate the whole of a large mince pie.

She went to bed with a heavy heart,

To awake betimes with a fearful start;

For on her chest,

Disturbing her rest,

Was a little old man in a purple vest.

'You find me here.'

He remarked with a leer, As he cocked his hat o'er his large left ear,

"To untie the knot

Of your wonderful plot; for I know who 's who and I

For I know who 's who and I know what 's what. You must marry Claude to the Lady Grey And balk the villain of his prey.

The rakish Lord with a touch of gout Must elope with the lady a trifle stout.

And a convent's walls must hide from view The ingénue with the eyes so blue.''

Then the little old man with the purple vest
Removed himself from the lady's chest,
And he vanished from view
Up the chimney flue,
As such queer people are wont to do.

The lady came out of her mince-pie trance And wrote the end of her great romance.

Oh, I am stabbed with läughter.

— William Shakespeare.

Lilian

Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Clasps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She 'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking through and through me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

Prithee weep, May Lilian!
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian:
Through my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver laughter trilleth:
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

Pray all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,

Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee, Fairy Lilian.

- Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Cherry Ripe

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do show.
There cheries grow, which none may buy
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearls a double row;
Which, when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow.
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt, with eye or hand,
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.
— Thomas Campion.

The bubble winked at me, and said,

"You'll miss me, brother, when I'm dead."

— Oliver Herford.

Laugh if you are wise.

— Marcus Valerius Martialis.

Ballade of the Comic Muse

Hail! mistress of the merry tongue,
Of lively wit and laughing mood;
Gay queen of humor, ever young;
Withal full of solicitude
To ease life's worst vicissitude
By some sage jest or subtle ruse
Of rhyme to teach us not to brood
When we may court thee, Comic Muse!

Since ancient Horace gibed and flung
His verses at Rome's feet, the crude
Conceits of time quaint bards have sung
To make dismay a platitude
And give a wider latitude
To joyousness; for who would choose
The worries of life's endless feud
When we may court the Comic Muse?

No; let us rather lounge among
Byways obscure, and thus elude
The striving hordes whose gains are wrung
From tortured lives and servitude.
If fate is harsh and times are rude,
To best resist—have nought to lose;
When we may court the Comic Muse?

Muse, lest ambition should delude, Be gracious, nor our suit refuse; For mirth shall every ill exclude When we may court thee, Comic Muse!

- Ray Clarke Rose.

I Only Laugh

I only laugh at the invidious grin
With which the goat-faced herd at me do stare;
I laugh, too, at the foxes, who with bare
Gaunt paunches sniff and gape, all hunger-thin.
I laugh, too, at the apes that look so wise,
And swell themselves to arbiters of thought;
I laugh, too, at the craven good-for-nought,
Who with his poisoned steel in ambush lies.

For when Good Fortune's wreath of Life's best flowers

Is smitten by the hand of adverse Fate,
And shattered at our feet lies all forlorn,
And when the heart within the breast is torn,
Torn, broken, cleft in twain and desolate,—
Why,—shrill, ironic laughter still is ours!
—From the German of Heine.

Laugh and grow fat;
Frown and be thin:
When you know that,
Laugh and grow fat,
Tie your cravat
Round double chin:
Laugh and grow fat;
Frown and be thin.

- Oliver Marble.

What then remains, but well our power to use,
And keep good humor still, whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear, good humor can prevail
When airs, and flights, and screams and scolding fail.
— Alexander Pope.

Time's Little Joke

First you 're born — and I 'll be bound you
Find a dozen strangers round you.

''Hallo,'' cries the new-born baby,

''Where 's my parents? which may they be?''

Awkward silence — no reply —

Puzzled baby wonders why!

Father rises, bows politely —

Mother smiles (but not too brightly) —

Doctor mumbles like a dumb thing —

Nurse is busy mixing something.—

Every symptom tends to show

You 're decidedly de trop —

You grow up, and you discover
What it is to be a lover.
Some young lady is selected —
Poor, perhaps, but well-connected,
Whom you hail (for Love is blind)
As the queen of fairy kind.
Though she 's plain — perhaps unsightly,
Makes her face up — laces tightly,
In her form your fancy traces
All the gifts of all the graces.
Rivals none the maiden woo,
So you take her and she takes you!

Ten years later — Time progresses —
Sours your temper — thins your tresses;
Fancy, then, her chin relaxes;
Rates are facts and so are taxes.
Fairy Queen 's no longer young —
Fairy Queen has got a tongue.

Twins have probably intruded —
Quite unbidden — just as you did —
They 're a source of care and trouble —
Just as you were — only double.

Comes at last the final stroke —
Time has had his little joke!

— William Schwenck Gilbert.

When My Love Laughs

When my Love laughs, the prettiest dimples grow
Upon her cheeks, and rippling rillets flow
From her sweet lips to prove the sweetest mirth,
And lips are parted for those pearls, whose worth
Sultan and Shah do not so much as know;

And all about the tenderest roses blow—
The loveliest blossoms mortals see below—
Methinks all roses there must have their birth
When my Love laughs.

And, more than this, the day begins to glow

The birds to sing, and radiant Dawn to strow

Hor roses over all the gladdened earth—

Bloomed e'er such joy within such tiny girth?

For surely Heaven no merrier sight can show

When my Love laughs!

— John Jarvis Holden.

If I laugh at any mortal thing
'T is that I may not weep.

— George Lord Byron.

The Village Epicurean

Take note of this, ye gentry who
Your self-made sorrows mourn!
Unblest with even a single sou
Blithe Pierre le Gros was born;
At ease to live, eschewing fame,
Of discontent the foe—
Such, sirs, the modest end and aim
Of jolly Pierre le Gros!

A hat—the product, you'd suppose,
Of his great-grandsire's day—
With ivy now, and now with rose
Perennially gay!
A suit of sacking, first possessed
Some twenty years ago—
Such, sirs, the wardrobe at its best
Of jolly Pierre le Gros!

A pack of cards, a flageolet,
A table, an old bed,
An empty chest, a silhouette—
His sweetheart's, be it said;
A jug which Providence takes care
Shall never cease to flow—
Such, sirs, the utmost wealth can spare
To jolly Pierre le Gros!

Instructor to the little folk
In games of every kind,
Profuse with pleasantry and joke
More racy than refined;

In country dance and catch and glee

His knowledge prompt to show—
Such, sirs, the whole proficiency

Of jolly Pierre le Gros!

Since costly brands he cannot get,
Content with common wine,
Preferring chubby-cheeked Nanette
To damsels superfine;
With loving-kindness brimming o'er,
With harmless mirth aglow —
Such, sirs, the philosophic lore
Of jolly Pierre le Gros!

Humbly to fall upon his knees
And to his Father say:
"Pardon me if my life displease
By being a thought too gay;
I ask but till the end to share
The bliss that now I know."—
Such, sirs, the unpretending prayer
Of jolly Pierre le Gros!

Ye Poor, who filled with envy fret,
Ye Rich, whose pleasures pall,
Ye Great, who, striving more to get,
Too oft are stripped of all;
Ye Kings, who see your crowns depart,
Your dynasties laid low,
A lesson learn and learn by heart
From jolly Pierre le Gros!
William Toynbee, from the French of Béranger.

Ballade of the Merry Bard

Though through the cloudy ranks of morn
The Sun-god sends no golden ray,
Though swift along the air are borne
The feathery shafts that none may stay;
Though wrathful storm-blasts pangless slay,
And wan the patient plodder rues
His lonely lot each dagging day—
He 's gay who courts the merry muse!

When down the fields the tender corn
Upsprings, and sees blue skies in May,
When budding blooms the boughs adorn,
And flowers bespangle sprig and spray,
When torrid summer's regnant sway
Has dimmed the foliage's fairest hues,
And bronzéd reapers house the hay—
He 's gay who courts the merry muse!

And when the hollow harvest horn
O'erflows with autumn's rich display,
When high, with goodly grain, new-shorn,
Is piled each lofty granary,
When, like dark moons amid the gray
Of cornfields, where the red ear woos,
The pumpkins lie in long array—
He 's gay who courts the merry muse!

Prince, e'en though Fortune go astray
And lost is wealth's bright-shining cruse,
Though dark and drear the weary way—
He 's gay who courts the merry muse.
— Clinton Scollard.

The Tables Turned

Every happy thing on earth Comes to crown our mortal birth; Roses red, and azure sky, Violets, and the day's eye. Singing maid, and whistling boy, Birds with many a burst of joy, Meadows that the sunlight dapples, Golden pears, and ruddy apples, Forest leaves in bright autumn, Aster, and chrysanthemum, Sapphire shadows on the snow, Frost flowers on the cold window. Youth, and dainty maidens' kisses, Smiles and dimples, fragrant tresses, Love, and all a lover's blisses. All have happiness, of course, Which the poet sings perforce In some poem large or small, Epic, sonnet, madrigal, Summing up, in his good leisure, All he thinks we know of pleasure: Yet neglected, quite unsung, Standeth one of blither tongue, And, when he has sung of these -Lo! a sound of revelries! Eyes half closed, and shaking side, Gasping breath, lips parted wide, Loud resounding to the rafter, Hear hale, hearty, thoughtless Laughter! And, although he may not know it, Laughter 's laughing at the poet! - Wallace Rice.

The Laughing Satyr

Thou woodland dweller of elusive Greece,
Thou laughing Satyr of the days of Pan,
Who caught thee from thy freedom and thy peace
And made thee thrall to dull prosaic man?
What demon huge beside thee nimbly ran
With horrid eyes that chilled thee into stone,
Froze all thy mirth as only demons can,
Checked thy gay blood, and made his very own
Thy laughter and thy song, and left thee thus alone?

Most lonesome wight, 't is twice a thousand years
Since those crisp leaves that bind thy marble brow
From tree were torn and shed their fragrant tears;
Yea, twice a thousand years engulf thee now
From that glad time and from the myrtle bough—
From high Arcadian woods, and from that gaze
Which stilled the heart that never questioned how.
So suddenly were darkened thy bright ways,
So swiftly blotted out those dear delightful days.

Oh, long ago thy comrades fied the earth
And all the gods departed long ago.

Couldst thou this hour regain thy wonted mirth,
No haunt, no face were found that thou wouldst
know:

No songs are sung, the graves are mossed with woe,
The streams are nymphless, and the ruby morn
Sets no fair sylvan temple all aglow;
The fields are dreamless, and the hills forlorn;
Sweet echoes tease no more, nor is one satyr born.

Laugh on, laugh on in ignorance of change,
For ever keep those lips remembering
Their mirth, those eyes their loves, nor think it strange.
The dryads thou dost see will endless sing,
The bloom be bloom for ever, and the spring
Flood thy glad fields with fragrance and with light
To farthest time, nor any joy take wing.
Yet they are gone, all gone into the night
Of countless yesterdays, beyond the misty height.

Live on, laugh on in white unchanging stone;
'T is better so than that thy heart shouldst wake
Unto the blow that thou art left alone.

A time may come when wearied earth shall take
Her leafy path again, and men forsake
Their mad designs; till then, cold marble be!

A face of laughter flouting grief and ache,
An eye intent upon the wind and free,
A heart as light as any wind in Arcady.

— Charles G. Blanden.

Why We Laugh

We laugh at what?

At anything that goes awry;
Because our woes are part forgot;
Because 't is better than to sigh;
We laugh at what
We cannot help — our common lot,
Even because we 're going to die;
Because we 'd rather laugh than not:
These seem to be some reasons why
We laugh at — What?

— Oliver Marble.

Jocosa Lyra

In our hearts is the great one of Avon
Engraven,
And we climb the cold summits once built on
By Milton.

But at times not the air that is rarest
Is fairest,
And we long in the valley to follow
Apollo.

Then we drop from the heights atmospheric
To Herrick,
Or we pour the Greek honey, grown blander,
Of Landor;

Or our cosiest nook in the shade is

Where Praed is,
Or we toss the light balls of the mocker

With Locker.

Oh, the song where not one of the Graces
Tight-laces,—
Where we woo the sweet Muses not starchly,
But archly,—

Where the verse, like a piper a-Maying,

Comes playing,

And the rhyme is as gay as a dancer

In answer,

It will last till men weary of pleasure!

It will last till men weary of laughter . . . And after! — Austin Dobson.

The Loons

Once ye were happy, once by many a shore,
Wherever Glooscap's gentle feet might stray,
Lulled by his presence like a dream, ye lay
Floating at rest; but that was long of yore.
He was too good for earthly men; he bore
Their bitter deeds for many a patient day,
And then at last he took his unseen way.
He was your friend, and ye might rest no more:

And now, though many hundred altering years

Have passed, among the desolate northern meres

Still must ye search and wander querulously,

Crying for Glooscap, still bemoan the light

With weird entreaties, and in agony

With awful laughter pierce the lonely night.

— Archibald Lampman.

In the vain laughter of folly
Wisdom hears half its applause.

— George Eliot.

It is good

To lengthen to the last a sunny mood.

— James Russell Lowell.

'T is over common
That men are merriest when they are from home.

— William Shakespeare.

Laughter and Death

There is no laughter in the natural world
Of beast or fish or bird, though no sad doubt
Of their futurity to them unfurled
Has dared to check the mirth-compelling shout.

The lion roars his solemn thunder out

To the sleeping woods. The eagle screams her cry.

Even the lark must strain a serious throat

To hurl his blest defiance at the sky.

Fear, anger, jealousy have found a voice.

Love's pain or rapture the brute bosoms swell.

Nature has symbols for her nobler joys,

Her nobler sorrows. Who had dared foretell

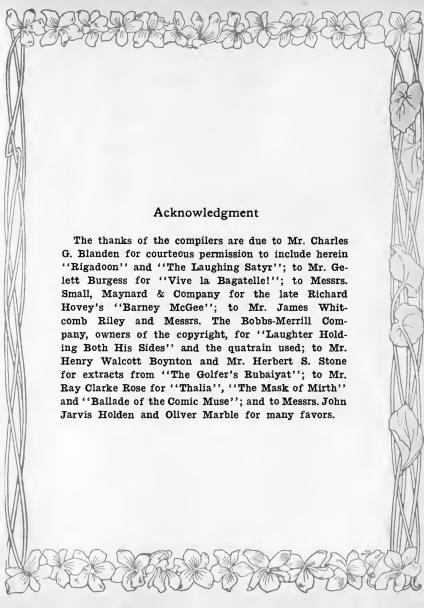
That only man, by some sad mockery.

Should learn to laugh who learns that he must die.

— Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

Laugh not too much; the witty man laughs least.

— George Herbert.



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